

Chapter 232 Landscape Improvements

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232.02 Applicability

Minimum site landscaping and required planting areas shall be installed and maintained in accord with the standards and requirements of this Chapter, which shall apply to all nonresidential projects, multi family residential projects consisting of 5 or more units, residential projects in the RMH-A subdistrict, and common areas of common interest residential subdivisions. All other residential projects in RL, RM, RMH, and RH districts consisting of 4 or less units shall comply only with the general tree requirements of this chapter.

232.04 General Requirements.

- A. Landscape plans shall be prepared by a California State Licensed Landscape Architect except plans for residential projects with 4 units or less may be prepared by the developer or a California Licensed Landscape Contractor. The plans shall be submitted to the Public Works and Community Development Departments and receive approval prior to issuance of a building permit. No significant or substantive changes to approved landscaping or irrigation plans shall be made without prior written approval by the Director and the landscape designer. Substantial changes shall require approval of the Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator, whichever granted approval of the project.
- B. Landscape improvements shall comply with the Arboricultural and Landscape Standards and Specifications on file in the Department of Public Works.
- C. Landscape materials shall not be located such that, at maturity:
 - 1. They interfere with safe sight distances for vehicular, bicycle or pedestrian traffic;
 - 2. They conflict with overhead or underground utility lines, overhead lights, or walkway lights; or
 - 3. They block pedestrian or bicycle ways.

- D. Evidence of completion of required landscaping and irrigation improvements shall be supplied to the Public Works Department on a Landscape Certification form. This form shall be required to be submitted prior to issuance of an occupancy permit for new construction. The Director shall approve a postponement of the required tree planting for specific residential projects when the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC & R's) for the project require installation of the City required tree planting within 90 days from date of occupancy of residential dwelling by the prospective homeowner.
- E. If mature trees that were originally required to be planted by this code, conditions of approval, or designed plans are removed, or if mature trees that are considered as specimen trees are removed, or if the trees are permanently disfigured or mutilated beyond their ability to regrow to an acceptable form for that specific variety, then those trees shall be replaced and, whenever possible, with equivalent size and specie per the project's original approved plans.

232.06 Materials

Landscape improvement plans shall be harmonious with the architectural design and demonstrate a recognizable pattern or theme for the overall development by choice and location of materials. Landscape plans shall conform to the following:

- A. Plant materials shall be selected for energy efficiency and drought tolerance; adaptability and relationship to Huntington Beach environment; color, form and pattern; ability to provide shade; soil retention, fire resistiveness, etc. The overall landscape plan shall be integrated with all elements of the project, such as buildings, parking lots and streets, to achieve desirable micro-climate and minimize energy demand and water use.
- B. The use of crushed rock or gravel for large area coverage shall be avoided.
- C. Nonturf areas, such as shrub beds, shall be top dressed with a bark chip mulch or approved alternative.
- D. Where shrubs or low-level vegetation are used, vegetative matter at maturity shall cover at least 75 percent of actual planted area.
- E. The use of landscape materials shall be designed to minimize sun exposure of paved surfaces and structures.
- F. Irrigation systems shall be in accordance with the City water efficient landscape requirements of Chapter 14.52 and the Arboricultural Standards and Specifications on file in the Department of Public Works.
- G. Turf areas shall be minimized. Those areas proposed shall be planted with field-grown established drought-tolerant sod. Seeding may be allowed by the Director.
- H. Seventy-five percent of all shrubs, except those used for ground cover, shall be a minimum 5-gallon size.
- I. Ground cover areas shall be planted with well-rooted cuttings or container stock.

232.08 Design Standards

A. General Planting Provisions.

1. A minimum of 8 percent of the total net site area shall be landscaped, or as required by Title 21 or conditions of approval.
2. For traffic visibility purposes, the maximum height of shrubbery shall be 32 inches within any parking area and within 5 feet of any driveway. (See Diagrams A, B, C, D)
3. Turf shall not be installed on grade differential greater than 4:1. Where the maximum overall grade differential is three (3) feet, 3:1 shall be considered maximum.
4. Any planter or screen wall shall be placed behind the landscape area and shall set back 5 feet from the edge of any alley or driveway. (See Diagram C)

B. General Tree Requirements.

1. Each single family residential lot less than 45 feet in width shall have one 24 inch box tree planted within the front setback area. The City's Landscape Architect shall determine whether a minimum 4 to 6 foot square (16-36 sq. ft.) planting area will be required upon review of the landscape plan. One 24 inch box tree shall also be planted in the streetside yard adjacent to a street without a parkway. (3334-6/97, 3410-3/99)
2. Each single family residential lot 45 feet or greater in width shall have one 36-inch box tree planted within the front setback area. One 36 inch box tree shall also be planted in the streetside yard adjacent to a street without a parkway.
3. Multi-family residential lots shall have one 36 inch box tree for every 45 lineal feet of street frontage planted within the setback areas adjacent to a street.

In addition, there shall be one 36 inch box tree planted within the common open space areas for each ground or first level unit.

4. Non-residential developments shall have one 36 inch box tree for each 45 lineal feet of street frontage planted within the first 15 feet of the setback area adjacent to a street.
5. Specimen palms may be substituted at a ratio of 1/2 foot brown trunk height for one inch of box tree inch required.

C. Off-Street Parking Facilities.

1. A 10-foot-wide landscaped planter area (inside dimension) shall be provided between any streetside property line and a parking area except at driveway openings. Berming shall be a minimum of 20 inches in height. When a planting area is less than 10 feet wide, a 32 inch high wall shall be provided. Where grade differential would not permit mounding, alternatives shown in Diagram B may be used. (See Diagrams A, B, C)

2. Parking facilities shall have perimeter landscaping areas as follows:
 - a. Areas shall be a minimum 3 feet in plantable width and include one tree for each 90 square feet of landscaped area.
 - b. Areas shall be increased to 5 feet in plantable width when the parking facility dimension is more than 100 feet adjacent to the side or rear property line.
 - c. Minimum plantable area for each tree shall be 48 inches square.
3. Interior landscaping areas shall be distributed throughout the parking area and shall equal 5 percent of the perimeter landscaping area. These areas shall include a minimum of one minimum 24-inch box tree for every 10 parking spaces and shall be located throughout the parking area.
4. The end of each row of parking spaces shall be separated from driveways by a landscaped planter, minimum 2 feet wide and in addition include a step off area. (See Diagrams C, E)
5. Planter areas adjacent to parking spaces shall be provided with a 12-inch-wide by 3 1/2 inch-thick "step off" area flush with and behind the curb for the entire length of planter or provide 4-foot-square or 5-foot-diameter circular planter surrounded by textured/and/or colored concrete.
6. A concrete curb may be required adjacent to the sidewalk within the right-of-way. (Refer to the Arboricultural and Landscape Standards and Specifications)
7. All parking area landscaping shall be protected from vehicular and pedestrian damage by a 6-inch-high, 6-inch-wide curb of portland cement concrete. Additional protection shall be provided by one of the following methods:
 - a. Two (2) feet of landscaping consisting of low shrubs or ground cover may be provided between a parking stall and the required landscape area. The additional landscaping shall not count toward the required percentage of landscaping or minimum planter width. This method will allow vehicles to extend over the additional landscape area in conjunction with permitting a reduction in the required length of the parking space from 19 feet to 17 feet; or
 - b. Other alternatives acceptable to the Director.

232.10 Irrigation

All landscape areas shall be provided with a permanent underground, electrically automated irrigation system, designed to provide complete and adequate coverage to sustain and promote healthy plant life. The irrigation system shall not cause water to spray onto or cause water, mud or debris to flow across a public sidewalk. Pop-up sprinkler heads shall be required directly adjacent to all pedestrian or vehicular surfaces and located in areas that avoid vehicle overhang. See Section 232.06F.

232.12 Exceptions

Existing developments approved prior to June 7, 1983, shall, at the time of expansion and/or exterior modification, provide 6 percent of the total net site area in landscaping with a minimum 6-foot-wide landscape planter (inside dimension) along any streetpy side property line. Current tree quantity and size requirements shall apply.

Existing developments located adjacent to a landscape corridor as depicted in the General Plan shall at the time of expansion and/or exterior modification provide a 10-foot-wide planter with 6 percent of the site landscaped.

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